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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
19 July 1954

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TO: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: An Evaluation of General Bennike, Palestine Truce Supervisor

Major General Vagn Bennike has been the chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine since 9 June 53, when he succeeded Lieutenant General William E. Riley, USMC (retired). General Bennike, 66 years of age, is a retired Danish officer--an engineering specialist--who achieved considerable fame for his work in the Danish underground during World War II.

During the period of General Bennike's assignment in Palestine, he has been faced with an increasingly complex situation, apparently in part the result of a provocative and aggressive Israeli policy which has been undermining the UN truce machinery. In the past year several major Arab-Israeli incidents evoked from Bennike and his subordinates, as well as from the UN Security Council, decisions and reports unfavorable to Israel.

Thus, for instance, on 23 September 1953, Bennike ordered Israel to cease work on its Jordan River diversionary canal. On 23 November, Israel was strongly censured by the Security Council for perpetrating the attack on the Jordanian village of Qibya on 14 October 1953. On 24 February 1954, Israel was sharply criticized by Bennike in his report on Arab and Israeli compliance with UN resolutions.

As a result of these developments, the Israeli press, apparently reflecting the attitude of government leaders, has waged a steady campaign against Bennike, accusing him of anti-Israeli bias and demanding his removal. There has been relatively little Arab criticism leveled against him.

State Dept. review completed

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American and Western observers generally agree that Bennike has handled his assignment with sincerity and fairness. He has been praised for the sharpness and adequacy of his reports to the UN. According to some, he has lacked sufficient ability and energy to handle the job and others have pointed out that his inability to express himself well in English has been a handicap.

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According to [REDACTED] information from the Department of State, the UN secretary general plans to remove General Bennike from this difficult position on 10 August 1954 and replace him with Lieutenant General Louis Maitland Burns (Canadian army, retired).

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON
Assistant Director
Current Intelligence

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